

Stephen Hawking - last writings - Artificial Intelligence - Superhumans - Genetic Engineering



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The late physicist and author Prof Stephen Hawking has caused controversy by suggesting a new race of superhumans could develop from wealthy people choosing to edit their and their children's DNA.

"I am sure that during this century, people will discover how to modify both intelligence and instincts such as aggression," he wrote.

The renowned theoretical physicist, who died in March this year, made the grim prediction in a collection of essays and articles recently published by the UK's Sunday Times, prior to the release of a book containing a collection of writings by Dr Hawking.

Dr Hawking was known for bringing clarity to some of the most mind-bending ideas in science such as the nature of black holes and the possibility of a multiverse.

In January 2015, Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, and dozens of artificial intelligence experts signed an open letter on artificial intelligence calling for research on the societal impacts of AI. The letter affirmed that society can reap great potential benefits from artificial intelligence, but called for concrete research on how to prevent certain potential "pitfalls": artificial intelligence has the potential to eradicate disease and poverty, but researchers must not create something which cannot be controlled.